

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. Claim 10-18 stand withdrawn. By this Amendment, claims 1, 4-8, 14 and 16-18 are amended. Support for the amendments to claim 1 can be found at least in claims 2 and 3, as originally filed. Claims 2 and 3 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited therein. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action objects to claim 4 for informalities. Claim 4 is amended to obviate the objection. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claim 1-6 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 6,077,483 to Locker et al. (Locker); and rejects claims 7 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Locker in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,260,035 to Lachman et al. (Lachman). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 1 recites, among other features, "wherein the outer wall portion has an inside shell layer located on the cell structural portion side and an outside shell layer located outside of the inside shell layer with the inside shell layer having a porosity higher than that of the outside shell layer, wherein the cell structural portion contains a ceramic material or a metallic material as a main component, and the outer wall portion contains a ceramic material as a main component." The Office Action separately asserts that Locker teaches the features of claims 2 and the features of 3, now incorporated into amended claim 1.

However, the Office Action has not asserted that Locker teaches the combination of features recited in amended claim 1. Indeed, Locker fails to teach the combination of the above-quoted features, as recited in amended claim 1.

For the rejection of claim 2, now incorporated into claim 1, the Office Action asserted that the steel can or enclosure 16 corresponds to the "outer shell layer." However, such a construction cannot reasonably correspond to "the outer wall portion contains a ceramic material as a main component," as recited in amended claim 1. Thus, Locker cannot reasonably be considered to teach the above-quoted features.

For at least the above reasons, Locker does not teach all of the features as recited in independent claim 1. Claims 4-6 and 9 are patentable for at least the respective dependence of these claims directly on an allowable base claim, as well as the separately allowable subject matter that these claims recite.

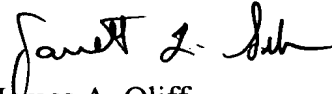
To any extent that Locker is even combinable with any combination of the other applied references, a conclusion which Applicants do not concede, no permissible combination of these references can reasonably be considered to have rendered obvious the combination of all of the features positively recited in claims 7 and 8, for at least the respective dependence of these claims directly on an allowable base claim, as well as the separately allowable subject matter that these claims recite.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1 and 4-9 under 35 U.S.C. §§102(b) and 103(a) as being anticipated by, or unpatentable over, the applied references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1 and 4-9 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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